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Sport for peace and development: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal

Solemn appeal made by the President of the General Assembly on 4 August 2004 in connection with the observance of the Olympic Truce

The President of the General Assembly has the honour to make the following solemn appeal in connection with the observance of the Olympic Truce:

On 3 November 2003, the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/6, in which it urged Member States to observe the Olympic Truce during the Games of the XXVIII Olympiad to be held in Athens, from 13 to 29 August 2004.

The sacred Greek tradition of *ekecheiria* (truce) constituted the cornerstone of the Olympic Games in ancient times, providing safety and a peaceful environment for both the athletes competing in the Games and for the spectators in attendance. Its very adoption was dictated by the oracle of Delphi as a way to put an end to the wars that at the time devastated the Peloponnese. The longest lasting peace accord in history was thus created.

Olympism was revived in 1896, aiming at contributing to a peaceful future for mankind through the educational value of sport. The Olympic Movement brings together the youth of the world in a great sports festival, promoting peace, friendship, solidarity and fair play.

Since 1993, support for the Olympic Truce has grown steadily within the General Assembly, reaching the unprecedented unanimous co-sponsorship of last year's resolution. During these turbulent times, Member States are demonstrating their confidence in the Olympic Truce Ideal.

This year, for the first time in the history of the United Nations, we received the Olympic Flame at United Nations Headquarters. It travelled around the globe, through 26 countries and 34 cities, covering all five continents. It carried the message of hope for a world free from hatred and war, a world where ideals of peace, goodwill and mutual respect form the basis of relations among peoples and countries.

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Observing the Olympic Truce means constructing bridges of communication between adversaries, allowing the youth of the world to peacefully participate in the Olympic Games and creating the necessary infrastructure for the continuation of dialogue and the renewal of hope for reconciliation, both during the Games and throughout the four-year period of Olympiads.

In times of violence and uncertainty, of war and struggle, when security becomes a pressing concern, we must always remember that defensive mechanisms need to be paralleled by resolute efforts to promote dialogue and understanding among peoples and Governments and to adhere to the ideals for which the Olympic Truce stands.

We are confident that the appropriate measures taken by Greece, in close cooperation with the international community, will ensure the staging of the Games in a safe and peaceful environment.

I, therefore, solemnly appeal to all States to demonstrate their commitment to peace in the world by observing the Olympic Truce during the XXVIII Olympic Games in Athens. While conflicts in the world will not cease overnight, if we could have peace for sixteen days, then, maybe, just maybe, we could have it forever.